NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

Office of Archives and History Department of Cultural Resources

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Machpelah

Townsville, Vance County, VN0025, Listed 3/27/2006 Nomination by Cynthia de Miranda Photographs by Alan Feduccia, February 2005



Façade view



Rear view and outbuildings

NPS Form 10-900 (Oct. 1990) OMB No. 10024-0018

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property	
historic name Machpelah other names/site number Macpelah; McPelah; Taylor, Robert B., Farm	
2. Location	
street & 12079 N.C. Highway 39; approx. one half mile south of Townsville n/a not for pu	
city or town Townsville 🗵 vicinity	y
state North Carolina code NC county Vance code 181 zip code 27	7537
3. State/Federal Agency Certification	
As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this important in the National Register of determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property important important in the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant in nationally in statewide in International Signature of certifying official/Title in the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources State or Federal agency and bureau in my opinion, the property important indicates the National Register criteria. (In the See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)	
Signature of certifying official/Title Date	
State or Federal agency and bureau	
lentered in the National Register. □ See continuation sheet □ determined eligible for the National Register. □ See continuation sheet □ determined not eligible for the National Register. □ removed from the National Register.	ate of Action
other, explain:)	

Machpelah			County, North Carolina				
Name of Property		County and State					
5. Classification							
Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Check as many boxes as (Check only one box)		Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in count.)				
□ private □ public-local	building(s) district	Contributing	Noncontributing				
public-State	site	17	2	Buildings			
 public-Federal	structure	3	0	Sites			
·	☐ object	2	1	Structures			
		0	0	Objects			
		22	3	Total			
Name of related multiple (Enter "N/A" if property is not par	property listing t of a multiple property listing.)	Number of Contri	buting resources previcegister	ously listed			
n/a		N/A					
6. Function or Use							
Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions) Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)							
DOMESTIC/single dwelling		DOMESTIC/single dwelling					
DOMESTIC/secondary structure		DOMESTIC/secondary structure					
AGRICULTURE/processing		AGRICULTURE/storage					
AGRICULTURE/storage		AGRICULTURE/agricultural field					
AGRICULTURE/agricultural field		FUNERARY/cemetery					
AGRICULTURE/animal fa							
AGRICULTURE/horticultu							
AGRICULTURE/agricultur	al outbuilding						
FUNERARY/cemetery	_						
7. Description							
Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions) MID-19 TH CENTURY/Greek Revival		Materials (Enter categories from instructions) foundation STONE					
LATE VICTORIAN/Queen Anne			eatherboard				
LATE 19 TH and 20 TH CEN REVIVALS/Colonial Reviva	TURY	STONE/gr					
		roof ASPHALT					
		other					

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Machpelah Name of Property	Vance County, North Carolina County and State			
8. Statement of Significance				
Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)	Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)			
A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.	AGRICULTURE ARCHITECTURE			
■ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.				
☑ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics				
of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.	Period of Significance			
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield,	ca. 1850-1956			
information important in prehistory or history.				
Criteria Considerations (Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)	Significant Dates			
Property is:	ca. 1850 ca. 1880			
 A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes. 	Cd. 1000			
☐ B removed from its original location.	Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked) n/a			
☐ C a birthplace or grave.				
□ D a cemetery.	Cultural Affiliation n/a			
☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.				
☐ F a commemorative property	Architect/Builder			
☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.	Newkirk, Willie, local carpenter			
Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation she	pets.)			
9. Major Bibliographical References				
Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form of	on one or more continuation sheets.)			
Previous documentation on file (NPS): preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested previously listed in the National Register Previously determined eligible by the National Register designated a National Historic Landmark recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #	Primary location of additional data: State Historic Preservation Office Other State Agency Federal Agency Local Government University Other Name of repository: North Carolina State Archives, Vance County Courthouse, Granville County Courthouse			

Machpelah	Vance County, North Carolina				
Name of Property	(County	and Sta	ate	
10. Geographical Data					
Acreage of Property approx. 323 acres					
UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)					
1 17 730560 4041240		3	17	730400	4040100
Zone Easting Northing 2 17 730440 4040900		4	Zone 17	Easting 729460	Northing 4040020
2 17 730440 4040900		4		See continuation sheet	4040020
Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.) Boundary Justification					
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)					
11. Form Prepared By					
name/title Cynthia de Miranda; and Alan Feduccia (owner)					
organization Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc.		c	late	August 25, 2006	
street & number P.O. Box 1171		telep	hone	919 682-2211	
city or townDurham	_ state	NC	;	zip code277	02
Additional Documentation					
Submit the following items with the completed form:					
Continuation Sheets					
Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the prope	erty's lo	cation			
A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having la	argo acr	0200	or nun	norque rocourcos	
	arye acr	eaye	or Hull	nerous resources.	
Photographs					
D					

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner				
(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)				
name Alan and Olivia Feduccia				
street & number 704 Wellington Drive		teleph	none _	919-942-3377
city or town Chapel Hill	state	NC :	zip code	27514-6721

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

(8-86)

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MATERIAL (continued from cover form)

Foundation BRICK

CONCRETE BLOCK

Walls LOG

STONE/granite

Roof METAL/Tin

DESCRIPTION

Machpelah is a Piedmont North Carolina farm encompassing 323 acres of rolling terrain near Kerr Lake in northern Vance County. The farm is on the west side of N.C. Highway 39, a half mile south of Townsville and about twelve miles north of Henderson, the seat of Vance County. The farm occupies a polygonal, but roughly rectangular, parcel with the long east side of the parcel fronting N.C. Highway 39. Machpelah's farmstead stands at roughly the center of this parcel, facing east at the end of a quarter-mile asphalt drive. Surrounding the farmstead are cultivated fields and pastureland interspersed with and separated by wooded areas (#24). Hereford cattle graze several pastures and tobacco, wheat, corn, and soybeans grow in the fields. Riparian forests border two streams that flank the farmstead; the streams each curve toward the center of the parcel, nearly meeting to form a horseshoe shape arcing through the parcel. The organization of cultivated agricultural fields and pastures is roughly consistent with the pattern that existed in 1956, as shown by aerial photos taken between that date and 1993.

Old-growth trees dot the narrow lawn that flanks the quarter-mile drive leading from N.C. Highway 39 to the farmstead; specimens include red cedar, pecan, and white, post, and black oak. A late-twentieth-century wood fence encloses this lawn and a 1954 guesthouse (#10), which occupies the site of the carriage house, north of the drive and east of the farmstead. The asphalt drive terminates at the metal gate of a late-twentieth-century fence enclosing the front yard around the main house. Beyond the gate, a seventy-foot-long brick herringbone walkway, bordered by old-growth English boxwoods, leads up to the ca. 1880 Edward O. Taylor House (#1), a two-story, vernacular frame dwelling with Greek Revival, Queen Anne, and Colonial Revival details. North of the brick walkway and slightly east of the house is a flower pit. Another late-twentieth-century wood fence defines the rear yard and separates it from the front yard. This arrangement was originally made to enable horses to be hitched in the back yard without disturbing the gardens in the front. A Greek Revival-style office (#2) and a well (#5) and several outbuildings (#3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9) stand behind and beside the house, in the rear and side yards; several of these buildings outline a courtyard immediately southwest of the house that would have served as a work yard for the household. This area holds a lawn and a flower garden today.

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Immediately west and north of the house, but outside the front and rear yards, stand more outbuildings and structures that supported work on the farm. Those buildings include a feed house (#14) stable (#15), corncrib (#16), and a barn (#17). Five tenant houses (#13 and #20-23) are spread throughout the acreage of the farm; four of the five (#20-23) are accessible from N.C. Highway 39 by dirt roads or driveways. A family cemetery (#18) established in the late 1700s occupies nearly an acre southwest of the farmstead, and an earlier, smaller cemetery (#19) with grave depressions but no markers lies southwest of the first burying ground. Two outbuildings, a small log building (#11) and a frame tobacco packhouse (#12) were moved to Machpelah from neighboring farms in the late twentieth century; those stand north of the lane and east of the guesthouse (#10).

Inventory List

The construction dates for the contributing and noncontributing buildings are based on family tradition and physical characteristics. Parts of the functional farm compound have been rebuilt from time to time to conform to changing agricultural needs; consequently, it is only possible to approximate the dates as indicated. Olivia Taylor Feduccia, the current owner, grew up on the farm and is the granddaughter of Edward O. Taylor, who owned the farm when the main house was erected.

1. Edward Osborne Taylor House, ca. 1880, ca. 1910, ca. 1960, Contributing Building

The house is a two-story, frame vernacular house with Greek Revival, Queen Anne, and Colonial Revival details at the exterior and interior. This is at least the second house built at the farm; according to family tradition, a ca. 1760 house burned to the ground, leaving only its massive stone foundation. The ca. 1880 house was built on that foundation by Edward O. Taylor, who had purchased the farm in 1878. The extant dwelling features a cross-gabled roof covered with asphalt shingles that replaced an earlier tin roof. Weatherboard sheathes the exterior. The house faces east at the end of the quarter-mile drive from the highway. There are a number of early- to mid-twentieth-century rear additions.

The footprint of the stone foundation is a T-shape with the long crossbar of the T forming the west side of the house; the broad stem of the T forms the south two-third of the dwelling. The house is simply detailed with several Classical elements: the gable ends feature cornice returns and a wide, plain frieze wraps around the house below the boxed cornice. Narrow pilasters with recessed panels rise at the corners of the house and display small, plain capitals. The tall watertable and massive stone foundation provide a strong base below the weatherboarded walls. The dwelling also has two interior brick chimneys with stone bases that match the foundation.

The facade is three bays wide with a central entrance; the north bay of the house projects beyond the plane of the central and south bays and is housed in the front-gabled section of the cross-gabled roof plan. The four-panel double-leaf entry doors are topped by a transom with etched glass featuring an

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octagonal pattern. Windows have large, six-over-six double-hung wood sashes with simple surrounds and feature louvered shutters painted dark green. A nearly full-width front porch has a hipped roof, a gabled entry with cornice returns, square paneled posts, and turned balusters supporting a molded rail. The porch foundation includes brick piers and at least one massive block of quarried stone.

On the south elevation, the west slope of the roof is double-pitched, allowing a double-pile width to the side-gabled block while replicating the steep roof pitch and narrow proportions of the front-gabled block. The south elevation features two six-over-six windows on each floor, all with louvered shutters.

The entire original west elevation is obscured by the rear additions. Exterior walls of the ca.1880 house are not visible inside the house, but an original single-leaf, four-panel back door with transom overhead remains, centered on the elevation and aligned with the front door. A ca. 1910 two-story shed-roofed addition to the south end of the west elevation provided bathrooms on both floors of the ca. 1880 house. This small addition stands on a brick foundation and has six-over-six double-hung windows on its south elevation and a concrete-block exterior stack on the west elevation. A ca. 1880 single-story shed-roofed building standing on stone foundation piers with brick infill has been appended to the north end of the west elevation, providing an attached kitchen to the dwelling. The kitchen has six-over-six windows on its west elevation. A smaller, side-gabled ca. 1880 pantry is appended to the north end of the kitchen addition. The pantry features a boxed cornice with gable returns and a single six-over-six double-hung sash window centered in its exposed gable wall; like the kitchen, it stands on stone piers with brick infill at the foundation. The kitchen and the pantry, which also share the same weatherboard exterior of the ca. 1880 section of the house as well as its plain watertable, appear to have originally been separate outbuildings that were appended to the house. Family tradition dates their attachment to the house around 1910.

Additions and alterations to the house around 1960 include the construction of a single-story gable-roofed den that extends west from the back of the house, enclosing what may have been a back porch between the bathroom addition and the kitchen addition. The den addition has a weatherboard exterior, stands on a continuous brick foundation, and features an exterior brick chimney at its west end and six-over-six windows on the north and south elevations. Screened-porch entrances were added on either side of the den at the same time; all sections feature German siding and stand on brick foundations. Also around 1960, a large dormer was added to the shed roof of the added kitchen, featuring three six-over-six windows and a dormer wall that aligns with the west wall of the two-story ca. 1910 addition.

The north elevation of the ca. 1880 block of the house is much simpler than the complicated massing at the rear, where all the additions were made. The north elevation is the eave wall of the front-gabled part of the ca. 1880 section and has a set of two six-over-six double-hung wood widows at each story of the back rooms and a single, centered six-over-six window at each floor of the front rooms. The

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windows across the lower story all have the louvered shutters seen elsewhere on the oldest section of the house.

Inside, the house features a center-hall plan with four rooms on each floor, each accessible from the hall through a single-leaf four-panel door. Ceilings are eleven-feet high throughout the ca. 1880 part of the house and walls and ceilings are plaster. Floors in this section are heart pine planks and all rooms feature tall Greek Revival baseboards. The large hallway features crown molding; the stair is positioned on the left side of the hall and has an octagonal newel post and plain narrow balusters. At the back of the hall, aligned with the front entrance, is the single-leaf, four-panel back door with a transom window above that leads into the rear additions.

The parlor occupies the northeast corner of the floorplan and measures sixteen feet square. The parlor features picture molding and a simple post-and-lintel mantel with a plain shelf on cushion molding above a frieze and battered pilasters.

The front room on the south side of the hall was originally used as a bedroom and now serves as a sitting room. As in the parlor, the fireplace is centered on the west wall and features a post-and-lintel mantel with a plain shelf over cyma recta and cyma reversa molding, a plain frieze, and flat Tuscan pilasters with semicircular notches cut out of either side of the profile at the widest part. A closet with a four-panel door fills the space to the right of the fireplace and a four-panel door to the left of the fireplace leads into the nursery, the back room on the south side of the house. Both doors have an additional surround with a vernacular arched feature above the door.

The nursery was originally a shallow room, measuring sixteen feet wide by just ten feet deep. Later remodeling, however, expanded the room into the ca. 1910 bathroom addition. The fireplace on the east wall heated the nursery. The post-and-lintel mantel has a plain shelf, flat pilasters, and a pointed arch at the frieze. A narrow two-panel Greek Revival door in the east end of the north wall provides entry into a closet that occupies space under the stair in the hall.

The dining room occupies the northwest corner of the ca. 1880 section, directly behind the parlor. The fireplace is centered on the east wall and features the most ornate mantel on the first floor: a molded shelf, a reeded frieze, and paired reeded colonettes. The dining room also has dentil crown molding and chair rail molding, both added in the 1950s. The plaster wall between the chair rail and baseboard has been painted white to have the appearance of wainscot. A built-in china cabinet fills the space to the left of the fireplace, and a four-panel door on the right provides access to a closet with a floor entrance into the earthen cellar, accessed by a stair. At approximately sixteen by seventeen feet, the dining room is the largest room on the first floor.

The added first-floor space at the back of the house includes a den, a bathroom, a kitchen, a pantry, and enclosed space that was originally a back porch but now serves as a transition space from the original

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house to the additions at the rear. The kitchen and pantry are housed in early outbuildings that were later appended to the house. The pantry features a late-nineteenth century interior with beadboard walls, shelves, counters, and cabinets. The kitchen fixtures and furnishings date from the second half of the twentieth century and obscure any historic interior detail that may remain. The den features unpainted pine paneling characteristic of the mid-twentieth-century, as does the transitional space, and the bathroom features typical twentieth century fixtures and ceramic tile in addition to a pine plank floor.

The floor plan upstairs is roughly the same as the first floor of the ca. 1880 section, with the addition of a small bathroom and adjoining closet that were inserted into the front of the wide center hall in a 1937 remodeling. The four original rooms are each accessible only from the hall through four-panel doors; the bedroom at the southwest corner maintains its original sixteen-by-ten-foot size. Mantels in the upstairs rooms are of the simple post-and-lintel variety with plain shelves, wide friezes, flat or paneled pilasters, and quarter-round molding applied to create vernacular designs. A four-panel door topped by a transom in the west wall of the upstairs hall leads into the added space in the dormer addition and the second-floor of the ca. 1910 bathroom addition.

2. Plantation Office, ca. 1850, ca. 1900, Contributing Building

The office is a single-story, timber-frame Greek Revival building with additions at the rear. The office stands on a stone pier foundation and has weatherboard siding, wide cornerboards, a boxed cornice, and red galvanized tin covering the low hipped roof. The office faces north and stands several feet from the house, behind the plane of the original rear elevation of the house. The large six-over-six windows and the single-leaf plank door all have crossetted surrounds, a typical detail seen in the Greek Revival houses of the area. Original windows also have flat-angle muntins, another typical detail of the period. The two-bay facade features the door positioned at the far left and a nearly centered window, accommodating the two-room plan inside. The east elevation of the original building features a single six-over-six window and the west elevation has a concrete block stack with the ghost line of the original chimney visible in the patched weatherboards behind the stack. The original rear elevation is visible inside the added rooms at the back; notable is the back door, which lines up with the front door and features the same crossetted surround but a replacement six-panel door. The interior of the ca. 1850 building has newer surfaces that are said to cover originals. These include tongue-and-groove flooring installed over the original plank floor, sheetrock walls over plaster, and simple baseboard molding. The original mantel on the west wall appears to be intact; it is a simple post-and-lintel composition with battered pilasters. Also surviving is a two-panel Greek Revival door in the wall between the two original rooms.

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Two shed-roofed rooms and a back porch were added in the early twentieth century, according to family tradition. The rooms appear to have been added separately: first, a kitchen at the east end of the south elevation, taking advantage of the existing doorway for access from the original building into the addition. The room has a smaller six-over-six window in the east side, a plank door at the south elevation, and weatherboard siding. Inside, the kitchen has wide plank floors, beadboard walls, high baseboard molding, and some early twentieth-century cabinetry. The second room has a six-over-six window at the south elevation, a concrete-block stack at the west elevation, and weatherboard sheathing. The addition of this room likely required the removal of a window at the south elevation of the original building; a large patch is seen in the weatherboards of the original exterior wall. This room has a narrow tongue-and-groove pine floor, a plywood door leading into the added kitchen, and a six-panel door leading into the large room of the original section. A shed-roofed back porch with plain squared porch posts and no railing spans the width of the south elevation.

3. Woodshed, ca. 1960, Noncontributing Building

The woodshed is a small, single-story, frame building with a shed roof, wide weatherboarded exterior, and a vertical board door. The building stands immediately west of the plantation office (#2) and also faces north. It replaced the feed house, a building of identical size and shape on the same site that was destroyed in a storm. The feed house was built before 1950 and had stored feed for riding horses that were kept in the back yard.

4. Oil house, ca. 1900, Contributing Building

This single-story, frame, gable-front building stands on a stone foundation; the building has weatherboard siding, a metal roof covering, a vertical board door on its east elevation, and an open shed on its south elevation. Original wide pine weatherboards remain on the south and rear elevations, while the front and north sides have later weatherboards with a narrower reveal. Inside, the building retains a Delco engine stand in the center of the cracked poured concrete floor. The oil house stands just northwest of the woodshed (#3); together, the office (#2), woodshed (#3), and the oil house form the southwest corner of the work yard southwest of the Edward O. Taylor House (#1). The oil house may have originally been a tack house for the riding horses that were kept in the back yard.

5. Well, ca. 1900, ca. 1950, Contributing Structure

Thick, red-glazed terracotta pipe lines the dug well, which is topped by a ca. 1950 above-ground, barrel-shaped brick structure sheltered beneath an open gable-roofed structure with a cedar-shake roof. The well stands several feet southwest of the Edward O. Taylor House (#1), just west of the ca. 1960

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den addition that extends from the rear of the ca. 1880 house. The well has been functionally replaced by a drilled well located near the office.

6. Salting house and dovecote, third quarter of the nineteenth century, Contributing Building

Among the oldest structures on the farm, according to family tradition, this tall, gable-front building faces east and has an attached shed room on its south elevation; these two attached structures stand on concrete-block pier foundations. Weatherboards sheathe the exterior of both sections and galvanized metal covers the roofs. Both the gabled section and the shed room have plank doors on their east-facing facades and each feature a one-room interior. The interior of the salting house features a plank floor and plank ceiling with several metal hooks. Two large hand-hewn log troughs, used for packing pork in salt for curing, remain. The building's braced timber frame is visible in the lower half of the interior, as are circular saw marks on some timbers; above shoulder level, metal sheathing covers the frame. A dovecote in the gabled attic was used for raising squab. Three entry holes for the birds are cut into the weatherboards in the gable. The building stands a few yards west of the Edward O. Taylor House (#1).

7. Privy, ca. 1900, Contributing Building

The privy is a shed-roofed frame building facing east with weatherboard siding, exposed rafter tails, and a three-hole seat. The privy stands immediately west of the salting house (#6).

8. Henhouse, ca. 1900, Contributing Building

This single-story frame building has a weatherboard exterior with galvanized metal covering the shed roof. A small plank door allows access from the east side, and a band of screened openings high along the south side provide light and ventilation. Inside, there are roosting compartments for hens. The building stands west of the privy (#7) and salting house (#6); a rectangular poultry yard is outlined by a tall wire fence to the south and east of the poultry house, west of the south end of the rear yard behind the Edward O. Taylor House (#1).

9. Flower pit, ca. 1920, Contributing Structure

The flower pit is a shed-roofed structure of greenstone granite blocks that are ashlar cut and laid in irregular courses with raised mortar. A plank floor covers the earthen pit, which is about four feet deep. The building features paired six-over-six windows on both the east and west elevations and is open on the south side. The flower pit stands several feet northeast of the Edward O. Taylor House (#1). According to family tradition, Robert Bellamy Taylor had this shed-roofed stone structure built for his

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mother Allene Hargrove Taylor (1858-1925) by a traveling craftsman who had built some local churches from similar material.

10. Guesthouse, 1954, Contributing Building

The guesthouse is a one-and-a-half story modest Colonial Revival dwelling with a continuous brick foundation, weatherboard exterior, and asphalt shingles covering the side-gabled roof. The house, four bays wide at the first floor of the south-facing facade, also has three gabled dormer windows at the south roof slope. A gabled roof supported by brackets shelters the six-panel front door, which is flanked by six-over-six windows. A paired set of six-over-six windows pierce the fourth bay at the east end of the facade; this space previously held a garage door until the garage was converted into a kitchen in the 1960s. An exterior brick chimney centered on the north wall of the main room heats that main room; a kitchen fills the remaining first-floor space at the east end of the dwelling's first floor. An open staircase at the southeast corner of the main room leads upstairs, where there is a single bedroom with a bathroom over the kitchen. The floors throughout are oak and walls in the first-floor main room are finished with pine paneling. The guesthouse occupies the site of the original carriage house, northeast of the Edward O. Taylor House (#1) and north of the asphalt lane that leads from N.C. Highway 39 to the farmstead. The guesthouse was built from wood milled on the farm, according to family tradition.

11. Log "biddy" house, ca. late nineteenth century, moved here in 2000, Noncontributing Structure

This small, one-story gable-roofed, dovetailed pine log structure was used to brood chicks. The structure was moved to Machpelah from a nearby farm in 2000 and now stands immediately north of the asphalt lane, about a tenth of a mile west of N.C. Highway 39.

12. Pack house, ca. 1940, moved here in 1986, Noncontributing building

Tall, gable-roofed tobacco packhouse with vertical board siding standing on concrete-block foundation. Moved to Machpelah from a nearby farm in 1986 and now stands north of the biddy house (#12), about a tenth of a mile west of N.C. Highway 39.

13. Tenant House #1, ca. 1920, Contributing Building

This one-story, side-gabled, three-bay, single-pile house with weatherboard exterior stands on a concrete-block pier foundation. The house, which faces south, has a centered front-gabled front porch. Two shed-roofed additions span the rear elevation, including an inset corner porch and a storage room accessible only from that porch at the west end of the north elevation corner and a second, larger addition at the east side of the rear facade. Windows throughout are six-over-six double-hung wood

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sash. There are three interior rooms: two rooms fill the original single-pile house and a bedroom occupies the addition at the northeast side. This tenant house stands a slight distance north of the feed house (#14) and the side yard of the Edward O. Taylor House (#1). Family tradition holds that this tenant house was built by local carpenter Willie Newkirk. Similar tenant houses in and around the Townsville area are known as "Willie Newkirk houses."

14. Feed house, ca. 1900, Contributing Building

The feed house is a front-gabled building with vertical plank siding and a galvanized metal roof. The building faces south and has a plank door in the west end of the facade; it stands at the north edge of the side yard of the Edward O. Taylor House (#1). The building was used to store feed for hogs and is lined with wire mesh at the interior to prevent rodent infiltration.

15. Stable, ca. 1950, Contributing Building

This front-gabled, single-story building has vertical plank siding and a galvanized metal roof. A pair of arched openings on the north elevation are partially covered by rectangular plank doors with metal strap hinges. Inside, a hayloft runs across the back of the stable. The stable stands northwest of the feed house (#14), north of the side yard of the Edward O. Taylor House (#1). This stable replaced an early-nineteenth-century stable that stood on the same site. Family tradition holds that it was built by well-known local carpenter Willie Newkirk.

16. Corncrib, ca. 1900, Contributing Building

Single-story, gable-front building with spaced horizontal board walls. The corn crib stands slightly northwest of the stable (#15) and northeast of the barn (#17).

17. Barn, ca. 1900, Contributing Building

The barn is a tall, gabled building with a heavy timber frame and weatherboard exterior. Attached open sheds flank the structure, which faces east. The south shed features a cattle hay-feeder of spaced cedar poles. There large doors on the east and west side and a hayloft door on the east side only. The barn stands several hundred feet behind Edward O. Taylor House (#1)

18. Family Cemetery, headstones dating to the mid-nineteenth century, Contributing Site

This nearly one-acre cemetery is about one hundred yards southwest of the oil house (#4), between two pastures. A wire fence encircles the cemetery and a wide metal gate provides access. The cemetery is wooded with young growth trees and has a thick periwinkle groundcover. The site has some headstones and several stone markers. All grave depressions face east. Two large marble headstones

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for Colonel Joseph Taylor (1742-1815) and his wife Frances Anderson Taylor (1743-1817) were installed, likely in the mid-nineteenth century, by the children of Frances A. Somerville, the youngest daughter of Joseph and Frances, according to inscriptions on the stones. The matching marble stones each feature an urn flanked by weeping willows; Joseph Taylor's also notes that he was a soldier in the Revolutionary War. Tombstones for Colonel William Hunt (1757-1833), also a Revolutionary war soldier, and his wife Elizabeth Taylor Hunt (1764-1822) are smaller but are also marble. There are several grave depressions in addition to twenty-three known burial sites, which were recorded on an 1838 plat drawn by a son of William and Elizabeth Hunt. The earliest burial shown on the plat is the 1774 interment of Catherine Pendleton Taylor, wife of settler John Taylor. A copy of the plat is in the possession of the owner.

Three other officers of the Revolutionary War are also buried in the cemetery along with their wives:

Col. John Taylor July 17, 1727 -Oct. 26, 1787

Elizabeth Lyne 1726-1798

Lt. Col. William Taylor 19 Dec.1737-5 Nov. 1803 Elizabeth Anderson 6 Feb.1749-2 Dec. 17--

Col. William Bullock 1721-Feb.1796 Elizabeth Taylor July 9, 1735-1816

19. Cemetery, eighteenth to early nineteenth century, Contributing Site

This small cemetery lies several hundred yards southwest of the family cemetery (#18) and has about twenty depressions oriented west to east. Five have simple field stones, some of which may have been altered with pointed tops as an ornamentation. It is a known feature on the farm landscape as Robert Bellamy Taylor (1893-1973), who spent most of his life at Machpelah, referred to this burying ground as an Indian cemetery. However, its Native American associations have not been confirmed.

20. Tenant House #2, ca. 1890, Contributing Building

This one-and-a-half-story, single-pile, side-gabled house has a two-bay facade, a shed-roofed front porch on square posts, and rear additions. Weatherboards sheathe the exterior, six-over-six windows pierce the walls, and metal covers the roof. One single-sash six-light window pierces the facade at the upper half-story, above the line of the porch roof, and a concrete-block and brick stack rises along the south gable wall. The one-room interior has an enclosed stair at the north side. At the rear (west) elevation of the house, a flat-roofed hyphen links to the north gable end of another gabled building, which has a shed room across its own west elevation. A concrete-block stack rises along the north elevation of the shed room. The hyphen and smaller gabled building, like the house, feature weatherboard exteriors, six-over-six double-hung windows or single-sash six-light windows, and metal

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roof coverings. The smaller gabled building is heavily weathered and appears to be older than the front gabled section. The house stands at the end of a short unpaved drive leading east from N.C. Highway 39, several hundred feet south of the main drive to the Edward O. Taylor House (#1).

21. Tenant House #3, ca. 1910, Contributing Building

This one-and-a-half-story, single-pile, side-gabled house has a three-bay facade and two interior hanging brick stacks. A vertical break in the weatherboards extends the full height of the facade, indicating that the house may be composed of two dwellings joined at their gable walls. Other details include a weatherboard exterior, exposed rafter tails, metal roof covering, and six-over-six windows. One end wall is covered with corrugated metal. A centered shed-roof front porch spans about three-quarters of the facade and has plain square porch posts. The shed-roof addition at the rear has a concrete-block hanging stack. A shed-roofed porch at one side of the dwelling has been partially enclosed. This tenant house and tenant house #4 (#22 in this inventory) both stand at the end of an unpaved drive leading east from N.C. Highway 39, several hundred feet north of the main drive to the Edward O. Taylor House (#1).

22. Tenant House #4, ca. 1910, Contributing Building

This tall, one-story building is two bays wide with a side-gabled roof, shed-roofed front porch, concrete-block foundation, weatherboard exterior, six-over-six double-hung windows, and metal roof covering; the building has the appearance of a converted packhouse or other outbuilding. Side and rear additions are shed-roofed with weatherboard exteriors, six-over-six double-hung windows, exposed rafter tails, concrete-block stacks, and metal roof coverings. This tenant house and tenant house #3 (#21 in this inventory) both stand at the end of an unpaved drive leading east from N.C. Highway 39, several hundred feet north of the main drive to the Edward O. Taylor House (#1).

23. Tenant House #5, ca. 1910 Contributing Building

This one-and-a-half-story, single-pile, weatherboarded house has a four-bay facade that includes two doors and two windows. Like tenant house #3 (#21 in the inventory), this house may be the result of two smaller houses that have been joined together: a vertical seam is visible in the weatherboards near the center of the facade. The house has six-over-six windows, a concrete foundation, and metal roof coverings. A full-width shed-roof front porch with square porch posts spans the facade at the east side, and a shed-room addition spans the entire width of the rear (west) elevation. Weatherboards on the south end of the building show no seam between the single-pile house and the shed-room rear addition, but a seam is clearly discernable at the north gable end of the house. A second shed-roof addition was apparently a porch; the north end of that is now enclosed, while south end is screened. This tenant house stands at the northeast corner of the parcel and fronts on N.C. Highway 39.

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24. Stable, ca. 1900, Contributing Building

Front-gabled stable with separate human and livestock doors at facade. The building has a weatherboard exterior that is patched in places with sheet metal, overhanging eaves, and plank doors. The gabled roof is covered in metal. Mule tack was found inside this stable, as well as a barrel containing feed. The building stands in its original location behind the tenant house (#23) at the northeast corner of the parcel.

25. Farm landscape, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Contributing Site

The 323 acres that compose Machpelah's farm landscape consist of gently rolling, partially wooded land. The farmstead stands roughly at the center of the acreage, at the end of a quarter-mile-long asphalt lane. Pastures flank the farmstead on its north and south sides; these are in turn bordered by creeks that bend though the farm's parcel, together forming a horseshoe shape. These spring-fed streams provide water for livestock and are bordered by old-growth riparian forests that include beech, yellow poplar, various oak, black gum, holly, and hickory trees. There is also a grove of old-growth black gum trees in the family cemetery (#19).

Horizontal board fences line the quarter-mile lane leading to the farmstead, along with old-growth trees including pecan, red cedar, post oak, black oak, white oak, and sweet gum. Trees in the lawn area immediately surrounding the main house include elm, willow oak, black locust, and red maple. Family tradition holds that the English boxwoods that line the brick path leading to the house date to the eighteenth century.

While the land surrounding the farmstead is known to have constituted a farm since the mid-1700s, the earliest documentation of Machpelah conforming to the present-day parcel dates from Edward O. Taylor's acquisition of the farm in 1878. A survey associated with the purchase shows a consistent organization of the land since that date, including the location of the farmstead and the quarter-mile lane, and census reports from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries confirm that farm acreage was both improved and unimproved. The existence of unimproved acreage, generally wooded tracts, was common in Vance County farms as it was across the state. Aerial photos from 1956 show a field pattern similar to today's organization of small fields interspersed among wooded areas and pastures. Today, tobacco remains the primary cash crop. Other fields are planted in soybeans and wheat; some of these fields front on N.C. Highway 39 while others are set back into the farm's large acreage. Vestiges of a grape arbor and orchard remain, but the remnants are not sufficient to convey their deliberate organization and cultivation as productive landscape elements.

Changes in the land dating from the late 1950s include some logging on the property that reduced the wooded acreage on the farm and the creation of irrigation ponds in response to drought in the 1950s.

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Statement of Significance

Summary

Machpelah is a 323-acre farm in northern Vance County that has been in continuous operation since its establishment by Virginia planters around 1754. A farmstead stands near the center of the acreage and is set back a quarter mile on the west side of U.S. Highway 39. The complex centers on a farmstead that includes a ca. 1850 Greek Revival plantation office; a ca. 1880, two-story, double-pile vernacular house with Greek Revival, Queen Anne, and Colonial Revival details; and several late-nineteenth- and early-to-mid-twentieth-century outbuildings. Additionally, five tenant houses stand in the pasture land, wooded areas, and cultivated fields that surround the farmstead. The ca. 1850 plantation office is the oldest extant building on the farm; no structures survive from the first century of the farm's existence. Machpelah meets National Register of Historic Places Criterion A in the area of Agriculture as an intact representation of a prosperous antebellum plantation that adapted to the new economy and labor structure of the post-slavery period in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The ca. 1850 plantation office and ca. 1880 house meet National Register of Historic Places Criterion C for Architecture as representations of the Greek Revival style and of a transitional style that bridged the long period of Greek Revival's popularity with the emergence of nationally popular styles like Queen Anne and Colonial Revival. The outbuildings, including an oil house (#4), salting house (#6), privy (#7), corn crib (#16), and barn (#17), among others, also meet Criterion C for Architecture because they embody the distinctive characteristics of nineteenth-and early- to mid-twentieth-century agricultural outbuildings that supported work on a farm. Similarly, the five tenant houses (#13 and #20-23) illustrate the post-slavery labor structure of tenant farming that kept Machpelah's fields in cultivation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The period of significance begins ca. 1850, the construction date of the plantation office (#2), and extends through 1956, the fifty-year cutoff date for National Register criteria for properties that do not possess exceptional significance.

Historical Background

Machpelah stands on the west side of N.C. Highway 39 between Little Island Creek and Little Nutbush Creek and between the villages of Williamsboro and Townsville in northern Vance County. This area, originally part of Granville County, has been variously identified as the Little Island Creek District, Nutbush, Townesville District, and Townesville Township through the several political divisions made since the farm was established in the 1750s. Multiple generations of two different families have owned Machpelah over the more than two centuries of the farm's existence. Both were Taylor families, although the farm sometimes passed to married daughters, bringing other surnames—Hunt, Townes, Feduccia—into the farm's genealogy.

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John Taylor (1696-1780) and Catherine Pendleton Taylor (1699-1774) of Caroline County, Virginia, moved south around 1754 to what was still Granville County, North Carolina, and established the farm. John and Catherine had eleven children during their long marriage, some of whom were already grown and married by the time of the move. Groups of extended families left Caroline County and other Virginia counties to escape the French and Indian War and at least some of John and Catherine's adult children moved to northeast Granville County as well. John and Catherine's immediate household was large in the first decade of their residence in North Carolina. At least four sons still lived with the Taylors in 1761, according that that year's poll tax listing (daughters were not included in the poll tax count). Tax lists also show that John Taylor's household included fourteen enslaved Africans or African Americans in 1761 and 1762, but only ten by 1764. Taylor continued acquiring land in northeastern Granville County, as did his adult sons. John Taylor's March 14, 1780 will implies that the acreage he acquired was not contiguous, as it mentions that Taylor lived on a five-hundred-acre-tract of the larger total acreage that he owned.

Catherine Pendleton Taylor died in 1774, prompting the establishment of a family cemetery immediately southwest of the farmstead. According to an 1838 plat drawn by her great grandson, Catherine Taylor's is the oldest grave in the cemetery. John Taylor, who died in 1780, is also buried there. The 1838 plat refers to the farm as "Machpelah;" this is the first documentation of this name for the farm. The spelling was later recorded as McPelah and by the time the 1878 survey was completed, it had changed to Machpelah. The oldest spelling for the property has been used for this National Register nomination form.

John Taylor's 1780 will gave his homeplace tract to his son Joseph Taylor (1742-1815). No buildings survive from this period and no images of the early house or farmstead have been identified. John Taylor also willed sums of money to several grandchildren and directed that the remainder of his estate be sold and the proceeds divided equally among his children.³

Joseph Taylor inherited Machpelah at age thirty-eight and he lived there with his wife Frances Anderson (1743-1817) for the remaining thirty-five years of his life. Joseph and Frances Taylor both stated in their wills that the estate be divided among their five children; their daughter Elizabeth Taylor

¹ *Granville County, North Carolina, Heritage, Volume I* (N.p.: Walsworth Publishing Company, 2002), entry 461; *Granville County, North Carolina, Tax Lists 1760-1764*, abstracted by Timothy W. Rackley (Kernersville, N.C.: T. W. Rackley, 2004); John Bullock Watkins, Jr., *Historic Vance County* (Henderson, N.C.: The Henderson Daily Dispatch Co., 1941), 6; Worth S. Ray, *Colonial Granville County and Its People* [Austin, Tex.]: The author, 1945), 300.

² "Graveyard at Machpelah, Granville Co., N.C." 1838 plat drawn by Memucan Hunt, copy in possession of Alan and Olivia Feduccia, current owners of Machpelah.

³ Will of John Taylor, March 14 1780, in *Granville County Original Wills, Vol. I*, abstracted by Timothy W. Rackley (Kernersville, N.C.: T. W. Rackley, 2002).

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(1764-1822) inherited the part of the farm that included the house and farmstead upon Frances's death in 1817, about fifteen years after Elizabeth's marriage to Colonel William Hunt (1757-1833) in October 1792. The Hunts were proprietors of Machpelah for a relatively short period, due to Joseph's and Frances's long lives. Frances's 1916 will indicated that one hundred pounds earned from the sale of some goods should go to the Hunts to "wall in the old family graveyard with stone." This work was apparently not done, and no standing structures survive from the period of Joseph Taylor's ownership of the farm or from Elizabeth Taylor Hunt's brief ownership. Both couples, Joseph and Frances Taylor and William and Elizabeth Taylor Hunt, are also buried in the family cemetery, according to the 1838 plat and to mid-nineteenth-century headstones at the cemetery. It was a son of William and Elizabeth Taylor Hunt, Memucan Hunt, who drew the 1838 plat of the family cemetery, the earliest documentation of the organization of any land at Machpelah.⁴

William Hunt's 1833 will leaves "the land whereon I live, containing 1,005 acres" to two of his daughters, Frances T. Hunt and Elizabeth Hunt Townes. Elizabeth Hunt Townes, who had married Edmund Townes in 1832, became the fifth generation of the John Taylor family to live at Machpelah. The ca. 1850 Greek Revival plantation office (#2 in the inventory) is apparently the only building from Elizabeth Hunt Townes's ownership that survives. In 1850, the Townes plantation consisted of 923 acres, 500 of which were improved for the farm operations. The cash value of the farm was \$3,692. In addition, Edmund Townes had nearly three thousand dollars worth of livestock, including sheep, swine, horses, oxen, milch cows, and other cattle. Towne's plantation produced twelve thousand pounds of tobacco in 1850 and also produced wheat, Indian corn, oats, peas, potatoes, wool, butter, hay, beeswax and honey for home consumption and to take to market. Slaughtered livestock also brought some income. The 1850 slave census lists twenty-two people under Edmund Townes's name, ranging in age from a year to sixty years old. ⁵

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⁴ Ancestry.com, 1800 United States Federal Census [database on-line] Provo, UT, USA: MyFamily.com, Inc., 2004, original data: United States of America, Bureau of the Census. Second Census of the United States, 1800 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1800), M32, 52 rolls; Ancestry.com, 1810 United States Federal Census [database on-line] Provo, UT, USA: MyFamily.com, Inc., 2004, original data: United States of America, Bureau of the Census, Third Census of the United States, 1810 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1810), M252, 71 rolls; Abstracts of the Wills and Estate Records of Granville County, North Carolina, abstracted by Zae Hargett Gwynn (Spartanburg, S.C.: Reprint Co., 1995).

⁵ Abstracts of the Wills and Estate Records of Granville County, North Carolina, abstracted by Zae Hargett Gwynn (Spartanburg, S.C.: Reprint Co., 1995); The Heritage of Vance County, North Carolina, Volume I (Winston-Salem, N.C.: Hunter Publishing Co., 1984), 22; Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, Granville County, Agricultural and Slave Schedules, microfilm, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh; Marriages of Granville County, North Carolina, 1753-1868 (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1981), 328.

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When the Roanoke River Railroad came through Lyneville, a village north of the farm in 1855, Edmund Townes donated land to the railroad for their local station. The village incorporated in 1857, changing its name from Lyneville to Townesville in his honor; the spelling was later changed to Townsville. Edmund Townes's acreage decreased by seventy-three acres by the time of the 1860 census, but Machpelah's profitability apparently skyrocketed. The cash value of the farm—which maintained its five hundred improved acres—shot up to sixteen thousand dollars. Machpelah produced the same crops and products as it had a decade earlier, and in roughly the same proportions. Townes slaughtered more livestock and produced slightly less tobacco, but the statistics for production at Machpelah in the agricultural schedule of the 1860 census are roughly the same as those in 1850. Thirty-two people are listed under Edmond Townes's name in the 1860 slave schedule, which also shows that Machpelah had nine "slave house" dwellings. None are extant today and their location in relation to the main house is not known.

In 1860, Machpelah's 850 acres qualified it as a very large plantation in a county known for large plantations. Still, several neighboring plantations were substantially larger. Of ninety-eight farms comprising more than a thousand acres in the state, thirteen were in Granville County. Eleven of those were near Machpelah in the Nutbush Township, part of which eventually became Vance County. However, Townes's five hundred improved acres matched or topped the improved acreage of five of those larger farms. By far, the wealthiest planter in Nutbush Township was James M. Bullock, whose thirty-seven-hundred-acre farm was valued at \$35,050.

Captain Joseph Townes, son of Edmund and Elizabeth Townes, inherited Machpelah after 1860. The economic collapse of the plantation economy is apparent in the agricultural census statistics of 1870: Machpelah was now only 280 acres, valued at two thousand dollars, and produced an estimated twelve hundred dollars worth of farm products. Joseph Townes paid five hundred dollars for labor, including the value of boarding in tenant houses on the land. In the Townesville Township, which replaced Nutbush Township in the census delineation, farms were worth anywhere between 114 thousand dollars.⁸

⁶ Samuel Thomas Peace, *Zeb's Black Baby* (Henderson, N.C.: 1956), 364-365; *Heritage of Vance County*, 22; Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Granville County, Agricultural and Slave Schedules, microfilm, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh.

⁷ Andrew J. Carlson and Marvin A. Brown, *Heritage and Homesteads: The History and Architecture of Granville County, North Carolina* (Charlotte: The Granville County Historical Society, 1988), 37; Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Granville County, Agricultural Schedules, microfilm, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh.

⁸ Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, Granville County, Agricultural Schedule, microfilm, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh.

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The dramatic reduction in Machpelah's acreage between 1860 and 1870 likely resulted from Joseph Townes's efforts to run a productive farm in the new economy where he had to pay for labor. Selling land could bring much-needed capital. Still, in the 1870s, Joseph Townes mortgaged Machpelah and eventually could not make the payments. Edmund Osborne Taylor (1854-1937), unrelated to the original Taylor family, purchased the farm at public auction in September 1878, including the house and outbuildings and three hundred surrounding acres.⁹

Edward O. Taylor had been born in Stovall, in north-central Granville County and had grown up at Longwood. His brother, John Herbert Taylor was a trustee of the Machpelah mortgage. With this sale, Machpelah passed out of ownership by descendents of the founders and yet returned to the Taylor name. In December 1878, just after purchasing Machpelah, Edward Taylor married Allene Grist Hargrove (1858-1925), who had grown up nearby at Hibernia (not extant) in one of the area's wealthiest families. Edward and Allene Taylor had six sons and two daughters, seven of whom lived to adulthood. The 1880 agricultural census lists Edward Taylor's farm at 300 acres: 200 tilled, 50 wooded, and 50 otherwise unimproved. The value of the farm, including buildings, was \$1,295, and Taylor had paid sixty dollars in farm labor wages in the previous year to an African American working for ten weeks. The estimated value of farm products in 1879 nearly equaled the value of the farm at eleven hundred dollars. Taylor's livestock, valued at \$243, included 9 horses, 8 swine, 65 sheep, 2 milch cows, and 2 other cows. The two milch cows produced seventy-five pounds of butter, and the tilled acreage on the farm produced 500 bushels of Indian corn, 125 bushels of oats, 50 bushels of wheat, 5 bales of cotton, and 3,000 pounds of tobacco. Fifteen trees in the orchard produced twentyfive bushels of apples. Around this time, however, a fire destroyed the house at Machpelah. Family tradition holds that the house that burned dated to ca. 1760, when John and Caroline Taylor established their plantation. The house that Edward Osborne Taylor built after the fire survives; it is the heart of the farmstead at Machpelah. 10

Little is known about the construction of the house. By 1890, Edward and Allene's family had grown to include seven children ranging in age from two to twenty years. Their eldest son worked as a clerk, likely in his father's supply store in Townsville, three younger sons worked on the farm, and the eldest daughter attended school. Also, the Taylors were active in the Episcopal church and were instrumental in the 1915 construction of the Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Townsville. Allene Hargrove Taylor had donated some of the land for the church, and Edward Taylor supervised construction of the building. In the meantime, in 1881, the General Assembly of North Carolina created Vance County from parts of Granville, Franklin, and Warren counties in the northeastern Piedmont section of the

⁹ 1868 survey of Machpelah annotated by Edward O. Taylor, copy in possession of Alan and Olivia Feduccia.
¹⁰ Vance County Heritage, 226, 227; Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, Granville County, Agricultural Schedule, microfilm, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh.

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state. The new county took its name from Zebulon Baird Vance, a Civil War leader, North Carolina governor, and United States senator. ¹¹

Robert Bellamy Taylor (1893-1973), a son of Edward Taylor and Allene Hargrove Taylor, was born and raised at Machpelah. Robert attended Horner Military School in Oxford, graduating in 1911, and embarked on a military career first in the National Guard and later, in World War I, in the U.S. Army. After the war, Robert returned to North Carolina and served two terms in the state House of Representatives from 1921-1925. In 1925, the year his mother died, Robert decided against running for a third term; instead, he returned home to help his seventy-one-year-old father manage the large farm and his Townsville store.¹²

The farm in 1925 consisted of 330 acres. The majority, 280 acres, remained wooded or in pasture, and a tenant farmer worked the remaining fifty acres. The tenant farmer raised tobacco on twenty acres, cotton on twenty acres, and corn on ten acres. The farm also had twenty laying hens and a single milch cow. Edward and Allene owned several substantial tracts of land throughout the county, each farmed by a tenant farmer. Together, they owned over fourteen hundred acres in Vance County, worked by five tenant farmers. This made them among the largest owners of farmland in Nutbush Township. Robert also operated the farm supply store and opened a saw mill in Townsville. ¹³

Edward and Robert Taylor's work evolved through the 1920s: in the 1920 census, both identified themselves as "farmer" to the census taker. By the 1930 census, however, Edward identified himself as "Capitalist" and "country landlord" while Robert identified himself as a merchant in the retail industry. Indeed, in 1935 there were sixty-seven people living on Edward Taylor's 1,111 acres, which included Machpelah and several disparate tracts. Within this total acreage, however, only 249 acres were worked, all by sharecroppers or tenant farmers. On the total acreage, sharecroppers and tenant farmers grew corn on 75 acres, cotton on 57 tobacco on 43, wheat on 25, oats on 10, cowpeas and clover on 31, and white potatoes and sweet potatoes on 4 each. Sixty acres were left lying out, while 802 acres were pasture, swamp, or woodland. The farm also had 13 horses and mules, 11milch cows, and 3 sows. Thirty-five trees in orchards produced fruit. Edward Taylor was the largest owner of agricultural land in Nutbush Township in 1935. 14

¹² Heritage of Vance County, 369.

¹¹ Peace, 53-55.

¹³ Department of Agriculture, Statistics Division, 1925 Farm Census Report, Vance County, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh.

¹⁴ Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, Vance County, Population Schedule, microfilm, North Carolina State Archives; Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930, Vance County, Population Schedule, microfilm, North Carolina

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Edward Taylor died in 1937, leaving the farm to Robert. Robert Taylor owned 1,263 acres by 1945, and substantially increased the percentage of the farm acreage tilled. By 1945, a total of one hundred people lived on Robert Taylor's collected acreage; tenant farmers worked 652 acres, more than half of the farmland. The acreage for corn and tobacco on all of Robert Taylor's farms increased substantially, growing 350 acres of corn and 110 acres of tobacco. Robert Taylor also owned twenty milch cows, fifteen sows, and one thousand hens in 1945. Machpelah's acreage remained around three hundred, as it had been since the 1878 purchase by Edward Taylor.¹⁵

Upon Robert Taylor's death in 1973, his daughter Olivia Taylor Feduccia inherited Machpelah. She has managed the farming operations with her husband Alan Feduccia for the last three decades.

Agricultural Context

Granville County in the mid-1750s included roughly the area of present-day Granville, Vance, Warren, and Franklin Counties. Most of the population of thirty-two hundred people were part of either a plantation or a pioneer farm. Planter families, like John and Catherine Taylor's, were more stable than the pioneer farmers, who often squatted on a tract of land and moved when a new frontier emerged. All farmers in this period, however, kept livestock and grew several crops in order to meet their subsistence needs. Livestock provided labor as well as meat, leather, milk, and butter for home consumption and to sell for cash. Grape arbors and orchards produced grapes, apples, peaches, and persimmon, and such fruit was often used to produce wine, cider, brandy, and other alcoholic drinks. Planters, in addition, grew the cash crops of the period: tobacco, corn, cotton, wheat, and oats. These crops required capital—for the transport to distant markets in Petersburg and Richmond—and a large labor force, both often lacking in the typical pioneer farm. Planter farmers, on the other hand, had cash and an enslaved labor force. The average size of all recorded grants in Granville County between 1746 and 1776 was 344 acres.

By the time Joseph Taylor inherited Machpelah in 1780, a thriving planter society existed in Granville County. A telling statistic is the number of enslaved people in the county: btween 1754 and 1782, the percentage of the Granville County population that was enslaved grew from twenty-six percent to forty-one percent. However, less than half of Granville county men owned slaves in 1782; of those who did, about four-fifths owned fewer than ten slaves and only about one in twelve

State Archives, Raleigh; Department of Agriculture, Statistics Division, 1935 Farm Census Report, Vance County, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh.

¹⁵ Department of Agriculture, Statistics Division, 1945 Farm Census Report, Vance County, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh.

¹⁶ Carlson and Brown, 8-9; James Roy Caldwell, "A History of Granville County, North Carolina: The Preliminary Phase 1746-1800," (Ph.D. diss, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1950), 92, 100-101, 104-105; Nannie May Tilley, "Industries of Colonial Granville County," *North Carolina Historical Review* 13 (October 1936): 278, 276.

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owned more than twenty slaves. Throughout the 1780s, these few rich planters became richer and their land holdings increased. At the same time, the number of landowners decreased, creating a wider gulf between the rich and the poor in Granville County. This trend reversed after 1790, however, when the county saw steady growth in the number of small farms.¹⁷

In 1782, the vast majority of estates in Granville County were one hundred to five hundred acres, with a substantial number over five hundred acres. Very few were smaller than one hundred acres. After 1789, the number of owners decreased but size of estates increased, averaging 620 acres each. By 1779, Granville had a varied agricultural economy; a number of crops, including corn, tobacco, wheat, and peas, were grown in large quantities and no one crop dominated. Farmers used horses and mules for transportation and labor; larger planters owned between ten and twenty-five horses and mules. Sheep were less common, but a few farmers raised large herds of sheep for their wool in the 1780s. In the meantime, large droves of hogs were common.¹⁸

Many of the richest Granville County farmers lived in the north, where soil was better and farms were closer to markets in Virginia. Machpelah was part of a loose neighborhood of large plantations known as Nutbush, located just below the Virginia state line in the northeast corner of Granville County, around the village of Williamsboro. It became the "social and cultural center of the county" in the late eighteenth century. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the families of Nutbush prospered more than any other Granville County community. ¹⁹

In the early nineteenth century, tobacco, which had been a cash crop in the eighteenth century, began to dominate the variety of crops grown in Granville County. Granville and other North Carolina counties that shared a border with Virginia became known as a tobacco belt and the Virginia tobacco markets of Danville, Petersburg, Norfolk, and Richmond remained important to residents of those North Carolina counties. By the time the federal government began reporting on agricultural production in 1840, Granville County produced more tobacco than any other in North Carolina.²⁰

Another dramatic change in Granville County during the first half of the nineteenth century was the improved access to markets that the new rail lines created. In the late 1830 and again in the 1850s, railroads laid tracks and established stations in Henderson and Townsville, respectively, which were still part of Granville County. The first railroad through the vicinity of Machpelah had been the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad, which established a depot in 1838 at the location of a stagecoach stop

¹⁷ Carlson and Brown, 19, 37.

¹⁸ Caldwell, 93, 99, 106.

¹⁹ Carlson and Brown, 11, 38; Caldwell, 31-32.

²⁰ Carlson and Brown, 27.

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a dozen miles south of the farm. The rail station quickly grew into a town, incorporated in 1841 as Henderson. The railroad was the Piedmont farmer's friend, dramatically improving his access to markets.²¹

In the decades before the Civil War, during Edmund Townes's ownership of Machpelah, Granville County farmers continued to grow a variety of agricultural products like oats, corn, and orchard fruits. Tobacco remained an important cash crop, and wheat and potatoes also produced income and were increasingly planted in the area from the 1840s through the 1860s. By 1860, Granville County (which still included the part of Vance where Machpelah stands) enjoyed such robust economic health that it was one of the state's wealthiest counties. It also had more enslaved people than any county in the state—over eleven thousand.²²

The emancipation of the county's thousands of African Americans brought an abrupt end to the plantation system and massive economic losses to planters. Throughout the county, smaller farms quickly became the norm as large landholders adjusted to the new economy in which they had to pay for labor. New arrangements for working the land evolved, including tenant farming, sharecropping, and hired labor. Tobacco remained the most important cash crop, and in 1872, Henderson (still part of Granville County) became a tobacco market town. Henderson handled sales of tobacco grown in eastern counties, as far as Greenville, as well as throughout Granville and in Person counties.²³

In the early decades of the twentieth century, tobacco and cotton were holding strong as cash crops and corn, oats, and wheat remained subsistence crops. Tobacco acreage nearly tripled between 1909 and 1918, and the pounds produced increased from less than four million in 1909 to about eight million by 1918. Vance County's leaf was processed into pipe, cigarette, and chewing tobacco. The county generally had more acres planted in cotton, but tobacco's value was much higher. Corn, a subsistence crop, occupied more acres than tobacco and cotton combined in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but farmers still relied on some imported corn for both their own consumption and for use as livestock feed. Vance County farmers in the twentieth century all kept hogs for home consumption and milch cows to produce milk and butter. The 1910 census reported that the average Vance County farm consisted of 77.6 acres.²⁴

In 1925, Nutbush Township consisted of a combination of large farms worked by sharecroppers or tenant farmers or small farms worked by owners. Most owners of larger farms—those consisting of a

²¹ Carlson and Brown, 29-31; Bishir and Southern, *Guidebook*, 160)

²² Carlson and Brown, 181-182, 190-192.

²³ Carlson and Brown, 53.

²⁴ S. O. Perkins, Soil Survey of Vance County, North Carolina (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1921), 8-9,

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few hundred to several hundred acres—were owned by whites who worked few, if any, acres. Of the 5,658 acres owned by white landowners in the township, only fourteen acres were cultivated by an owner, while tenant farmers and sharecroppers farmed 772 acres. Small farms ranged from ten to one hundred acres and were virtually all owned by African Americans. Many small farms were less than fifty acres, while a few rivaled the size of the large farms owned by whites and were also worked by sharecroppers and tenant farmers. The pattern persisted in 1935.²⁵

By the middle of the twentieth century, under thirty percent of Vance County's twelve-thousand working citizens worked on farms. Nearly a quarter worked in local industry, which by this time included textile and cereal mills, tobacco factories, granite quarries, and even Tungston mines. Throughout the remainder of the century, agriculture continued its decline. By 1990, less than four percent of Vance County's working population made their living on a farm. ²⁶

Architectural Context

Greek Revival

The Greek Revival style first influenced domestic architecture in North Carolina in the 1820s, just after the completion of William Nichols's remodeling of the North Carolina State Capitol (destroyed by fire in 1831). By the 1830s, the Greek Revival style took hold in the state as the preferred architectural expression for large plantation houses and some associated outbuildings. The North Carolina Greek Revival dwelling more often tended toward a simple, symmetrical hip-roofed or side-gabled version rather than the showy gable-front temple form. The center-hall plan became ubiquitous with the growing popularity of the Greek Revival; its use had been limited in the Federal and Georgian houses that pre-dated the classical houses of the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century. Greek Revival houses were generally single-pile with end chimneys or double-pile with interior chimneys between the front and back rooms. Interior details included tall baseboards rather than the paneled wainscot of the earlier styles and post-and-lintel mantels often adorned with fluted pilasters, Greek key patterns, and blocky rectilinear relief detail. The uniformity of the style resulted from popular pattern books like Asher Benjamin's *Practical House Carpenter*, which provided patterns for facades, floor plans, molding, mantels, and door and window surrounds. While the earliest Greek Revival houses in

²⁵ 1925 and 1935 Farm Census Reports, Vance County.

²⁶ Bill Sharpe, "Vance's Varieties," *The State* 21 (April 1954): 2-7, 20; 1990 labor statistics from the Henderson-Vance County Chamber of Commerce website at www.hendersonvance.org/populationprofile.asp, accessed August 24, 2006.

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North Carolina were designed by prominent urban architects, pattern books like Benjamin's enabled local builders to erect houses in their own version of the Greek Revival.²⁷

In the area that is today's Vance County and eastern Granville County, the Greek Revival style first appeared in the late 1830s, generally as an update of an existing Georgian or Federal-style house. Some Vance County examples are Ashland (NR 1973), Pleasant Hill (Rivenoak) (NR 1979), and Ashburn Hall (NR 1977). All three have pedimented single-story front porches rendered with varying levels of Classical detailing. Ashland and Pleasant Hill are Georgian houses of the late eighteenth century remodeled in the early and mid-nineteenth century into the Greek Revival style, while Ashburn Hall was erected in 1840 in the Greek Revival style. Ashburn Hall is finely detailed but exhibits a restrained version of the style and features lofty rather than the characteristically wide proportions. The side-gabled house has a pedimented single-story front porch flanked by unusual pedimented bay windows. Ashburn Hall also retains a small collection of nineteenth-century frame outbuildings, including two barns, a meat house, well house, and small dwellings or kitchens, but none share the Greek Revival detailing. 28

Several Vance County houses are attributed to Warrenton builder Jacob Holt (1811-1880), who often combined the Greek Revival and Italianate styles. The ca. 1853 section of Pool Rock (NR 1978) near Williamsboro is a fine example, featuring a typical Greek Revival low-hip roof, symmetrical three-bay facade, single-pile depth and rear interior chimneys. The house is also thickly adorned with a bracketed cornice and bracketed porch posts with turned pendants and pinwheel and arched tracery at sidelights and windows.²⁹

These Vance County examples stand in stark contrast to the surviving Greek Revival rural houses of today's Granville County. The 1987 Granville County-Oxford Historic Survey found that Greek Revival "is the most significant of the county's many [architectural] styles." The survey further notes that the surviving examples in today's Granville County, unlike those in Vance County, are pure examples of the style: "In form and conception [the execution] is complete, with little hint of what preceded it or what was to come." Rose Hill (NR 1988) is a rare brick version of the style, a double-pile 1834 house with a single-story hip-roofed front porch supported by Ionic columns. The Marcus

²⁷ Catherine W. Bishir, *North Carolina Architecture*, portable ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2005)196, 235-237; Marvin Brown and Patricia Esperson, "Historic and Architectural Resources of Granville County, North Carolina," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, F-9

²⁸ Brown and Esperson, F-8; Catherine W. Bishir and Michael T. Southern, *A Guide to Historic Architecture of Piedmont, North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 163-165; Catherine Cockshutt [Bishir] and Jim Summer, "Ashland Hall," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 1977.

²⁹ Bishir and Southern, 163; Catherine Bishir and Michael Southern, "Pool Rock Plantation," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 1978.

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Royster House (NR 1988), built around 1850, features an academically rendered pedimented portico with paired columns and an elaborately detailed classical frieze. Modest versions of the style had interior details characterized by simple expressions of Greek Revival forms: post-and-lintel mantels with plain pilasters and suggestions of plinths and capitals rather than fully realized versions, and windows with flat-angled molding and rectilinear surrounds. Notably, such modest interior details persisted past the abandonment of the exterior expression of the Greek Revival style, and were still in use in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. ³⁰

The ca. 1850 plantation office (#2) at Machpelah reflects the height of the Greek Revival era in Vance County. That an outbuilding would be adorned with fashionable detailing indicates that architectural style was important in the antebellum period and shows the prosperity of that time. The Machpelah office is the only vernacular Greek Revival outbuilding identified in Vance County, but others were likely built in such a prosperous plantation economy. Despite its additions and interior alterations, the office retains its architectural integrity and is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for architecture as a rare surviving outbuilding rendered in the Greek Revival style.

Vernacular Houses and Popular Styles of the Late Nineteenth Century

After the Civil War, life changed completely for plantation owners and former slaves alike, and domestic architecture changed just as dramatically. Many farmers went into debt, often losing their farms, and freed slaves struggled to find housing and to establish a livelihood in a brand-new economy. They often did so as tenant farmers, living in single-story vernacular houses amid the fields of a former plantation. In addition to the reorganization of labor on the farm, the railroad and increasing industrialization affected the look of new buildings. New houses built for land-owning farmers in this period were most often vernacular dwellings that typically followed the I-house form—a two-story, single-pile, side-gabled frame house—and sometimes exhibited applied ornament of a popular architectural style like Queen Anne, Italianate, or Colonial Revival. Few examples of Colonial Revival detail from the nineteenth century are evident in rural Vance County. Historians completing the 1987 survey of Granville County found remnants of the Greek Revival in interior details: simple door and window surrounds and post-and-lintel mantles persisted. Given their shared history, this pattern likely holds true in Vance County as well.³²

³⁰ Brown and Esperson, F-9, F-11; Carlson and Brown, 183, 185-187.

³¹ Survey and Planning Branch, Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, "Historic and Architectural Resources of the Tar-Neuse River Basin: Appendix 24, Vance County Inventory," February, 1977.

³² Brown and Esperson, F-11.

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Examples of the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century triple-A I-house, so called for the third, ornamental gable added at the center of the eave line at the facade, abound in Vance County still, and many exhibit the applied ornament of popular architectural styles as in Granville County. The most common ornamental work surviving on these Vance County triple-A I-houses is the sawn brackets, turned porch posts and balusters, and patterned shingles of the Queen Anne style. An excellent example is the ca. 1890 Kimbrell House (#42 in the Vance County inventory of 1977) in the Townsville vicinity. The triple-A I-house has an elaborately shingled center gable as well as turned porch posts and balusters, a spindlework porch frieze, and sawn brackets.

The Edward O. Taylor House at Machpelah is a vernacular house that does not fit the common pattern of an I-house with applied design. Rather, the details and plan of the house combine elements from the Greek Revival style, which was less in vogue than in previous decades, with the massing and ornament of the Queen Anne and Colonial Revival styles that were emerging in popular architecture in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. While the house does feature the asymmetrical massing associated with the Queen Anne style, it is notable that the massing may be the result of making the new house conform to the foundation that survived the fire. Other Queen Anne details include turned balusters at the porch and a transom window above the front and original back doors. Many doors throughout the house are of the four-panel Colonial Revival-type, while some closets feature vernacular two-panel Greek Revival doors. Other vernacular Greek Revival trim include the returns of the boxed cornice, the paneled square porch columns at the exterior, and the tall baseboards and post-and-lintel mantels. The floor plan of the house reflects the center-hall plan that the Greek Revival style made uniform across the county in the middle decades of the nineteenth century.

As a vernacular house and as replacement of the burned dwelling, the Edward O. Taylor dwelling was undoubtedly influenced by the earlier house, if only in its reuse of the original foundation, as well as by the emerging architectural trends of the time. Without photographs or renderings of the original house, however, it is difficult to know to what extent the replacement house attempted to replicate the earlier dwelling. Ashland (NR 1973) and Pleasant Hill (NR 1979), surviving houses from the Georgian period in Vance County, were remodeled into the Greek Revival style, as stated above. Still, much of their original appearance remains evident. Notable is that both houses are blocky, side-gabled dwellings with pairs of exterior chimneys. If the foundation at Machpelah's Edward O. Taylor House dates to the late eighteenth century, as family tradition suggests, the house would have been substantially different from these two surviving examples.

While the Edward O. Taylor shares little with other surviving late nineteenth-century vernacular houses in Vance County, it meets National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C as an example of a transitional style that bridges the Greek Revival with the emerging Queen Anne and Colonial Revival styles.

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Agricultural Outbuildings

The architectural survey of Granville County found that, as the practice of farming decreased in the second half of the twentieth century, the antebellum outbuildings that tended to survive were those that related to domestic life on a farm and therefore remained in use—kitchens, farm offices, smokehouses. Vance County also seemed to reveal this pattern in the 1977 survey of the Tar-Neuse River Basin. The survey identified six farms with surviving collections of outbuildings; at least two of those no longer survive. Some outbuildings that did survive into the twenty-first century include the nineteenth-century frame barns and meathouse at Ashburn Hall (NR 1977).

One collection identified during fieldwork for this nomination defies this pattern. Behind the Turner House (#75 in the 1977 inventory) in eastern Vance County stand three log tobacco curing barns, one double-pen log barn, one frame curing barn, a frame packhouse, stable, corncrib, equipment shed, and smokehouse. The relationship of the outbuildings to the main house has been somewhat altered by the realignment of the road, which used to separate the house from the agricultural compound. The road was re-routed and the house heavily remodeled to turn its back on the outbuildings. This compound differs from that at Machpelah in several ways: the saddle-notched log buildings suggest an older compound that relates more to the processing of the agricultural crops—most notably tobacco—than to the operation of the household.

The Machpelah collection is not only generally of a later vintage than the Turner compound, but also includes more buildings related to the household—the office, oil house, privy, salting house, and flower pit. These are balanced by buildings that relate to the work in the fields, including storage buildings like the barn, feed house, and corn crib, and buildings like the stable that relate to livestock. The surviving tenant houses at Machpelah also speak to the organization of farm labor in the midnineteenth through the mid-twentieth centuries. Together, the agricultural outbuildings at Machpelah meet National Register of Historic Places Criterion C in the area of architecture as a fine example of agricultural outbuildings expressing the broad array of activities and organization of labor at the late nineteenth- and early- to mid-twentieth-century farm in Vance County.

³³ Carlson and Brown, 190-192; "Vance County Inventory," 24.5-24.18.

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UTM References

Zone Easting Northing

- 5. 17 729400 4041200
- 6 17 730020 4041700

Verbal Boundary Description

The property is described in Vance County tax map (Townsville Township), map no. 325. Machpelah was surveyed in 1991, by Cawthorne & Associates, Registered Land Surveyors, P.A., Henderson, NC (survey enclosed). See attached tax map at a 1=200 ft scale for boundary. The tax parcel number is 0325 03003.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the Edward O. Taylor House, associated outbuildings and tenant houses, and the 323 acres of associated Machpelah farm land west of N.C. Highway 39N. This parcel represents the 1878 acquisition of the farm by Edward O. Taylor.

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PHOTOGRAPHY

Thirteen of the fourteen photographs taken by Alan Feduccia of 704 Wellington Drive, Chapel Hill, NC, February 2005. Resource number in parentheses

All photographs shot with Canon EOS D60 digital SLR, 6.1 megapixels, with 28-135 mm f/4.5-5.6 Canon lens.

Machpelah

Townsville vicinity, Vance County, North Carolina

- 1. House front (1) and drive, looking west
- 2. House, south wall, looking northeast
- 3. House, rear view with outbuildings, looking southeast
- 4. House interior, stairhall, looking west
- 5. Office (2), looking south
- 6. Salting house and pigeon loft (6) looking west
- 7. Flower pit (9) looking east
- 8. Barn (17) looking west
- 9. Cemetery (18), looking west
- 10. Tenant House #2 (20), looking north, photo taken by Cynthia de Miranda, October, 2006
- 11. Drive, looking west
- 12. Large Pond, looking west
- 13. Treeline, north gallery, looking north
- 14. Pasture and wooded area, north gallery, looking north